

Vaccines

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ees to several places to get these done. This also means results are streamlined and employers get them faster.

Hope's services are in demand. In a HR.com survey, 96% of employers reported that their companies conduct at least one type of employment background screening. A 2019 HireRight report found that 62% of companies have job candidates test for alcohol or other drugs.

As of May 1, the company will officially rebrand as 911 OccMed - Workplace Wellness to reflect the breadth of services. Hope helmed her company and its growth by catering to clients' needs along the way.

"We started in one area and then continued to evolve into a one stop solution for vetting employees," Hope said. "The business has always told me the direction where to go. I listened to what the employers wanted."

What started out in a single location now spans four in Chandler, Glendale, Mesa and Tempe. Last November, the company added more when employers asked her to do rapid testing.

Hope took it further this year when she created her mobile medical unit to do vaccination events throughout the state, collaborating with government entities to go to vulnerable populations and communities where registering for the vaccine would be challenging.

She's hit grocery stores and panaderias. On a recent weekend, her team gave 315 vaccinations at an outdoor event. Now, she's heading out to farms to assist those workers. Both testing and vaccinations are free to recipients.

Fast growth for company

For the past four years, Sal Aguilar, head of operations for Cruz Concrete, has relied on Hope and her team for everything from pre-employment drug screenings to background checks. When she started doing rapid COVID-19 testing last year, it was a lifeline to the small Mesa company whenever an employee felt ill.

"That really helped us keep our employees safe because we could get immediate results from her. That played a big role in keeping them safe, and keeping them working," Aguilar said.

Aguilar said his company plans to take advantage of the mobile vaccination unit for his staff, many of whom may not otherwise have access to the vaccine even though they want it.

"She eliminated those hurdles with COVID testing and will eliminate those with the vaccine. It's hard to navigate some of those state systems," Aguilar said. "Sarah is awesome to work with. When I need something, all I need to do is call her. She keeps the flow going."

One of Hope's first clients was Valley



Nurses administer vaccine to Taylor Farm Employees at Taylor Farm on April 16, 2021. MEG POTTER/THE REPUBLIC



Annemarie Hadlock opens up another box of the Modern COVID-19 vaccine at Taylor Farm on April 16, 2021. MEG POTTER/THE REPUBLIC

Metro, one of about a dozen at the time. She knew everyone by name and the testing they would require. She used paper logs to keep track of everything. Then the former Discount Cab signed on. This led to more clients. Pen and paper would no longer do. This was only in year two.

"We had to go from being a tiny mom-and-pop to being systemized very quickly," Hope said.

In its first year, Hope's company generated \$16,000, she said. Last year it did \$1 million and this year it's projected to top \$3 million.

"Just being able to be the solution for the community, and to be lucky enough to serve the community ... it just makes me happy," she said.

But this doesn't mean Hope will pop

any champagne bottles.

"I was brought up so poor and (with a) fear of failure, so I don't celebrate wins," she said.

Childhood lessons remain top of mind

Born to Cuban immigrants who didn't speak English, Hope is a first generation Cuban-American whose first language was Spanish. She grew up in Florida, where her parents worked at homes in Orlando's ritzy Bay Hill Golf and Country Club. Her mother cleaned the houses and her father did the lawns. Hope took on those duties with her parents as a child.

This upbringing plays a major role in how Hope runs her seven-figure busi-

ness and what she aims to accomplish with COVID-19 vaccines. She talked about the difficulties members of the Hispanic community have when navigating the online registration process and paperwork. It's why Hope has a team dedicated to do these tasks manually for those who need assistance.

"I grew up with my mom and dad not knowing English. I had to go to the doctor's office with them. I was the one to go to the bank with them. I have a huge heart for the kids having to do this," she said. "And the ones who don't have someone don't get the vaccine."

Hope started her career in public records in the late-1990s, and owned an internet company, which she later sold.

Hope's journey to successful entrepreneur wasn't smooth, however.

She left an unhealthy marriage and moved to Arizona 10 years ago with \$800 to her name, her young daughter and her dog. She went into banking as a single parent to support her family.

This path eventually led her to create 911OccMed. It also led to her husband, Jason Hope, who works with her.

"He says that without him, I'm hopeless," she said, laughing at the pun.

Hope's parents are not alive to see their daughter's success and impact. Talking about this creates a reaction opposite of laughter. But they are never far from her thoughts, or heart.

"You bust your butt for your parents to be proud of you," Hope said. A big pause was followed by her voice cracking. She admitted to tearing up. "I'm thinking about my dad. I hope he's looking down on me saying, 'I'm so proud of you.'"